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Kata selection of intellectually impaired athletes at the top-level para-karate competitions

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INTRODUCTION:

Para-karate made its debut at the World Championships in Linz 2012 and since then it has been an integral part of the WKF Senior World Championships, which take place every two years. The top-level kata performance analysis is common [1,2], but there is limited knowledge of performance structure in top-level para-karate kata competitions for intellectually impaired (II) athletes. Repetition of the same kata is allowed for II athletes [3]. The main goal of the study is to describe the type and frequency of performed katas at the three consecutive World (2016, 2018, 2021) and four European (2018, 2019, 2021, 2022) para-karate championships. Then, investigate if there is a relationship between the sport class (II athletes and II athletes with Down syndrome) and the kata selection.

METHODS:

All performed katas during seven top-level events were recorded. Competitors gender, name of the performed kata, and sport class were recorded. A chi-square test and descriptive statistics were conducted. A total of 245 kata were performed (153 in the male and 92 in the female category).

RESULTS:

The most performed katas were Gojushiho Sho (29%), the same as in able-bodied kata competition, followed by Jion (9%), Suparinpei (9%), Chatanyara Kushanku (8%), and Sansai (7%). There is a significant relationship between sport class and choice of katas ($p = 0.05$). The Jion kata is not found in able-bodied competition. Athletes with Down syndrome select for the competition katas with lower athletic and technical levels, with a lower fast-slow movement ratio [4]. Only 5 athletes perform two different katas during one competition.

CONCLUSION:

Top-level II athletes have a similar kata selection as the no-impaired karate athletes. The WKF Para-karate rules allow the repetition of the same kata during all rounds of the competition. Therefore, II athletes and their coaches prefer to use only the one and the most challenging kata to succeed with a lower rate of fast-slow movement ratio.

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